

Keep You Safe

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Summary: Matt had always scared away the monsters that haunted him. Bad dreams, fighting parents, it didn't matter. He could always make it better. He always made them leave him alone...even if it meant leaving with them. A story of the Ishida divorce. T.K./Yamato brotherly love.

Keep You Safe

"There's no other love like the love for a brother. There's no other love like the love from a brother."

-Terri Gullemets

* * *

><p>A crash jolted T.K. from his dreams of dinosaurs and giant parrots into a dark room filled with moonlit toys and muffled yelling. It took a moment for his mind to catch up with the sounds around him and realize what woke him.<p>

His parents were fighting again.

He sat up and rubbed his eyes with the back of his hands. He listened for a moment and felt his heart start to beat faster. He knew his parents yelled a lot, even though Matt tried to distract him from it as much as possible, but something about tonight's fight felt different. Maybe it was the fact that his daddy's S's sounded too long. Maybe it was the fact that his mom's voice was too high. Either way, T.K.'s tired 5-year-old mind just couldn't put his finger on it.

He heard a crashing noise, like the time he accidentally dropped one of mommy's water glasses, before he realized why this fight felt different than the others. Where was Matt? He hadn't climbed up into his bunk this time. He always came to chase the monsters away.

He looked around the room, his heart pounding as his eyes darted around the dark space. He always got scared when his mom and dad fought and Matt knew how to chase his fears away. His anxiety increased even more when he remembered the last time Matt had been missing from their shared bedroom when his parents were arguing. He didn't know how it happened, but Matt had a big bruise on his arm when he woke up the morning after that happened.

T.K. felt fear, more powerful than before, well in his chest and steal away his breath. What if Matt was out there again? Matt had still been up when T.K. had gone to bed, what if he was out in the living room? What if he got hurt again? He scrambled to the edge of his top bunk bed and looked around. "Matt!" he rasped, just frantically above a whisper. Matt had always said to be quiet when mom and dad were yelling, like when they played hide and seek.

"Shhh, Teek. It's okay," whispered Matt. "Go back to sleep."

T.K. looked over the edge and almost sighed when he saw his brother illuminated in the moonlight. He was sitting on the floor, leaning against their bedroom door dressed in his pajamas and looking very tired.

"Why are you on the floor, Matt?" asked T.K., trying to ignore the shouts coming from behind the door. Matt always told him to make believe it wasn't happening. "Did you fall out of bed?"

Matt let out a tired chuckle. "Yeah, buddy. I rolled over and fell out of bed. Needed to wake up a bit before I tried to get back in."

"Did you have a bad dream?" he asked. His brother was so silly, falling out of bed.

"No," said the older blonde with a yawn. "I guess I just rolled over too far."

"Well it's a good thing you decided to start sleeping in the bottom bunk then, huh?" That must be why Matt told him he was going to take the bottom bed a few months ago. Maybe he was scared of falling too far.

"Definitely a good thing," said Matt with a smile.

Another crash sounded outside their room, except this time T.K. noticed the crash came from something breaking on their bedroom door. The yelling became louder and he heard his mommy yell something about 'drinking'. Was daddy not drinking his milk? T.K. knew his mom usually scolded him for not drinking it, so maybe his dad hadn't been either.

He noticed his brother had moved when whatever it was crashed on their door, bending his knees and pushing against the door with his back. Why was he doing that? Was he worried because something got broken?

He could hear his dad now, yelling something about cheating right outside his door. T.K. didn't get it. Was mommy not playing a game

right? Is that why he wasn't drinking his milk?

They seemed to fight about milk and games a lot more lately. It had never been like this though. Usually they just yelled for a while, there were never crashes. There was a loud thud followed by more yelling and T.K. could just make out Matt's name in the argument.

He didn't like it when they yelled about Matt. He didn't know why they fought about him because Matt never let him hear what they said after his name came up. He would usually start telling him a story or playing his harmonica. He knew it couldn't be good things though because Matt always seemed sad after it happened. It took a lot to make Matt sad. He was surprised that Matt hadn't climbed the ladder up to him yet.

There was another loud crash and the yelling got worse, louder than it ever had before. T.K. could feel the tears welling in his eyes. He couldn't block out this argument and he was starting to get scared. Then he heard it.

"And what about T.K.?"

"What about him?" yelled Natsuko, and T.K. saw Matt's attention instantly go toward the door, his body going rigid.

"Is he even mine? Maybe he's really Yuri's!"

"What is wrong with you?! I'm not doing anything with Yuri!"

"I bet he's really Yuri's, isn't he?!" yelled Hiro. "I always did wonder. The kid hardly even looks like me!"

"Are you insane?!"

"Well, let's just go get him and compare!" yelled his dad. T.K. instinctually moved toward the wall behind his bed when he heard footsteps coming toward the door. His parents had never come into their room when they fought before, even the night Matt had gotten hurt. The tears filled his eyes but he wouldn't cry. Matt never cried during the fights and neither would he. He could be strong just like Matt.

And Matt could always keep the monsters away.

Matt's actions were instantaneous. The second the footsteps were heard, he scrambled up and did the one thing their mommy always told them never to do: he locked the door. T.K. watched as his brother grabbed the desk chair and jammed it under the door handle.

"What are you doing? Leave the boys alone, Hiro!" yelled Natsuko, audibly approaching the door as well.

T.K. couldn't look away from the door, fearing what would happen if he came through that door. He knew his dad would never hurt him, but he had never thought he would break anything either.

He watched, eyes wide and breath coming in quick puffs, as the door handle harshly turned back and forward; his father pushed at the door, stopped only by the lock and a padded wooden chair. The tears threatened to spill over before he felt his face come into contact

with Matt's shoulder and he pulled him into a tight hug.

"Stop it, Hiro!" his mom yelled as the handle of the door continued to turn violently.

"It's okay, Teek," came Matt's soothing voice as he continued to hold the boy tightly, rocking them both. "Just block it out. It's okay."

"The door is locked!" yelled Hiro.

"See, even your children are afraid of you when you're like this!"

"You know the rules!" Hiro yelled, completely ignoring his wife's protests. "Open the goddamn door, Matt!"

T.K. felt Matt's grip on him tighten just a bit , but he remained in his position on T.K.'s bed, between his brother and the threat of the door. "Just block it out," he repeated like a mantra. "Just block it out."

T.K. wasn't so sure Matt was trying to reassure him anymore.

"Hiro!"

"Get your ass out here, Takeru," yelled Hiro through the door. "I need to talk to you. Now!"

And he couldn't pretend anymore.

He was scared. He didn't want to go out there, but what if he didn't? Did that mean he was cheating like mommy? Was dad going to break stuff around him too? Fear overtook him. Tears fell down his face as he began to sob aloud. He was scared of what would happen if he went out as his parents' shouts continued, but he was also afraid of what would happen tomorrow if he didn't.

"It's okay, T.K.," came Matt's voice, breaking the child's train of thought. "He won't get in here. I won't let him. Just block him out."

"I can't," cried T.K.

"Open this door and get out here! I want you out here now!"

"He isn't going to get you. I won't let that happen. I promise I'll keep you safe. Just go to sleep. It will all be better in the morning."

T.K. continued to cry, his little hands gripping Matt's sleep shirt. His body shook in fear as Matt continued to hold his brother tight against his chest, rocking him back and forth.

And that was when T.K. heard it; this simple little melody resonating from Yamato's chest as he hummed. The world around them became easier to block out as he listened to the melody, cries slowly disappearing; the monsters chased away. When he ceased his sobs, though the tears continued to fall as he sniffed, Matt began to sing.

_ "Quiet your heart
>It's just a dream
Go back to sleep_

I'll be right here
>I'll stay awake
As__ long as you need me __
>

_To slay all the dragons
>And keep out the monsters
I'm watching over you_

My love is a light
>Driving away all of your fear
>So don't be afraid
>Remember I made
__A promise to keep you safe_

You'll have your own battles to fight
>When you are older
>You'll find yourself frozen inside
>But always remember

If you feel alone
>Facing the giants
>And you don't know what to do

My love is a light
>Driving away all of your fear
>So don't be afraid
>Remember I made
__A promise to keep you safe."_

* * *

><p>He woke up the next morning to the sunshine flowing in through their bedroom window, illuminating their room in warm light. He rubbed his eyes, still feeling tired as he tried to remember when he had fallen asleep last night; a soft melody resonating in his head.<p>

That's when he remembered the fight.

He sat up quickly, his eyes instantly landing on the form of his old brother lying with his back to him. He looked really tense, just like he had last night. He pushed himself onto his elbow and turned to look at T.K. with a soft smile. "Morning, Teek," he said with a yawn.

T.K. couldn't help but hesitate in answering his brother. He looked so tired, like when he had gotten sick last year and couldn't sleep, dark circles under his eyes as he smiled. "Good morning."

"You ok?" he asked, sounding a little more concerned.

T.K. nodded as he grabbed his teddy bear and held him close. "Are mommy and daddy mad at us, Matt?" he asked, tears starting to well in his eyes. What if they were put in timeout today? He didn't know why daddy was yelling at them last night.

Matt's arms were around him instantly, holding his little brother as the tears started rolling down his face again. "No," said Matt. "Mom and Dad aren't mad at us. Don't worry about that."

"Then why were they yelling?"

Matt hesitated, something he seemed to do more and more when Takeru asked this question. "Mommies and Daddies fight sometimes. It means they care about each other."

"Like when you yell at me not to touch your harmonica?"

T.K. felt a chuckle vibrate in Matt's throat. "Yeah, like that."

"Mattâ€|everybody's mommy and daddy fight like our mommy and daddy, right?" he asked, scared of what the answer was going to be. He very much wanted Matt to reassure him that their family was exactly the same as everyone else's. That there was nothing wrong with them, but Matt's silence after he asked didn't make him feel any better. He didn't answer for a long time, stopping on this question longer than he had ever done before.

"No, Teek. They don't," he said, obviously angry at himself for saying it.

The two sat there quietly for a long time. "Will they always yell at each other? Will it always be like this?"

"I don't know," he said, pulling his brother closer. "I hope not," he whispered.

The pair heard a chair scrape across the floor in the kitchen, causing T.K. to bury his head deeper into Matt's chest. "It's ok," said Matt, pulling away from the younger boy and heading toward the door.

"No," he said, scurrying to follow his brother out of the bed.

"It's alright," he said pulling the chair away from the door. "You stay here. I'll be right back."

"Where are you going?" he asked.

Matt shot his little brother a smile, the one he always used when he told him that everything was going to be ok when their parents fought. "To fight monsters of course." T.K. couldn't help but smile back. Everything was always better when Matt said that. He settled back into his bed and watched as Matt left the room, closing the door behind him.

He expected Matt to only be a minute, but he was gone for a long time. He sat staring at the door, waiting for his brother to come back to the room; to come back with a piece of toast for breakfast and tell him that everything was ok again. To come back and play with him in their room all day.

Just like they always did.

The door suddenly opened and he couldn't help but back up a little as his dad walked through the door, Matt following close behind him. His dad went to their closet, pulling out Matt's backpack and starting to fill it with clothes. This had never happened before. T.K. climbed

off the bunk bed. "Daddy what are you doing?"

He didn't answer him, only continued to fill Matt's clothes into the bag. He watched Matt grab his harmonica and sit on his bed, a solemn look on his face. "What's going on?"

Matt looked up and threw on a smile, that stupid smile that meant something was wrong. "Come sit by me, buddy."

T.K. climbed onto Matt's bed, Matt pulling him into a quick one armed hug. He put his harmonica to his mouth and began playing a song, one he played to T.K. once and a while to make him feel better or to help him fall asleep. He snuggled into his brother's side, listening to the melody. He noticed his mom was standing in the door, watching Matt play with tears in her eyes.

He wondered why she was sad. Was it because daddy had been yelling?

"Let's go, Matt," said Hiro, stopping Matt's song.

"Butâ€¦" started Matt, surprised.

"I said now," he said harshly, grabbing his hand and gently pulling him to his feet.

"Let them say goodbye," said Natsuko.

Goodbye? Why would they say goodbye, crossing her arms and leaning her back against the wall. She had her head down, looking anywhere but at the two boys.

"For God's sake, it's not like they're never going to see each other again."

"Hiroâ€¦"

Matt pulled away from his father's hand and ran over to his little brother. "I have to go away for a while, ok?"

Fear instantly gripped T.K.'s heart. Go? Go where? "Why?" he asked, instantly becoming frantic.

"It's okay. Dad and I are going to go live somewhere else for a while," he said mussing up the smaller boy's hair.

"Can I come with you?" he asked.

"Not this time, buddy. You gotta stay here and take care of mom." He gave T.K. another smile, but he could see that his eyes were shinier than normal.

Matt was sad.

That meant this was bad.

"When are you coming back?"

"Iâ€¦.I don't know."

His reaction was instant, lurching forward and wrapping his arms around Matt's neck and refusing to let go. "I'm coming with you!" he yelled.

"You can't," he said, his voice wavering as he hugged T.K. tighter than he ever had before.

"This is why I didn't want to do this," said Hiro. "Now T.K. is upset."

"I don't want you to go!" yelled T.K. as he started to cry. "I won't let you!"

"It's time to go," said Hiro, his voice cracking a bit. He grabbed his younger son and pulling the pair apart.

"No!" yelled T.K. as Hiro gave him a tight hug. "No, I don't want Matt to go!"

"I love you, T.K." said Hiro as he held the boy, putting the boy at his mother's feet as Matt stayed on the floor.

"You can't!" he yelled as he tried to struggle out of his mother's hand. "You can't go! You live here!"

"Come on, Matt." He noticed his dad's eyes were shiny too. His dad never had eyes like that.

Matt got up and followed his father to the front door, putting on his shoes in silence. "Matt!" cried T.K.

The boy looked up, his eyes filled with tears. He ran over and wrapped his arms around his little brother one more time. "I love you, Teek," he whispered. He moved his lips close to his ear like he did when he was sharing a secret. "I told you I would get rid of the monsters."

"Let's go," said Hiro and Matt pulled away, sending T.K. into a new fit of tears and screams.

"Take care of T.K. for me, ok mom?" said Matt as Natsuko nodded, standing up while holding the wriggling child as he tried to get down and to his brother. Hiro opened the door and grabbed Matt's hand, guiding the small child out the door. T.K. saw the tears start to fall down Matt's face as the door closed behind him.

He was silent for a moment, waiting to wake up. It had to be a dream. His big brother was always there. There was no way he would leave.

But he did.

"MATT!" he yelled, tears starting again and he fought to get free. His mother sunk to sit on the entrance floor, holding him tight. Whispering apologies in his ears as they both cried; throwing out promises that everything would be ok.

He curled into her chest and sobbed. She held him in a tight hug and rubbed his back as the tears streamed down his face, but it wasn't the same. He needed the melody. He needed to be rocked back and forth

as a young boy's voice told him it would be better tomorrow, that everything would be ok. To tell him the dreams weren't real. Someone to drown out his thoughts that bad things were happening. Someone to tell him that he wouldn't be sad forever; that the yelling would stop.

His mother was trying, shushing him and saying it would all be okay as she held him tight, but it wouldn't be okay. Matt was gone and no matter how she tried, the sadness wouldn't go away. She couldn't take away his fear. Only Matt could do that, and he was gone.

Who was going to chase _those_ monsters away?

* * *

><p>"Sometimes when you sacrifice something precious, you're not really losing it. You're just passing it on to someone else."<p>

-Mitch Albom, _The Five People You Meet In Heaven_

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><p>This story was inspired by the song Keep You Safe by JJ Heller (also the song used in the fic). It inspired my vision of the Ishida divorce and influenced the events discussed in Chapter 22 of my story My Protector, My Guardian.<p>

End
file.